

In the Claims:

Claims 1-36 (CANCELLED).

37. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A fastener for securing coapted valve leaflets together, said fastener comprising:

a first plate having an axial and lateral direction;

a pair of laterally spaced-apart penetrating elements on the first plate, said first plate being free of additional penetrating elements spaced axially from the pair of laterally spaced-apart penetrating elements;

a second plate having an axial and lateral direction, wherein the first and second plates are joined by a laterally oriented hinge and the axial direction is perpendicular to the hinge; and

a pair of holes on the second plate arranged to receive the penetrating elements when the plates are brought together to fasten a pair of leaflets therebetween, wherein said fastener is composed of a biocompatible, non-immunogenic material.

Claims 38 - 39 (CANCELLED).

40. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A fastener as in Claim 37, wherein the penetrating element passes entirely through the receiving holes.

41. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A fastener as in Claim 37, wherein the plates have a thickness in the range from 0.5 mm to 1.8 mm, a width in the range from 0.3 cm to 0.7 cm, and a length in the range from 0.6 cm to 1.4 cm.

42. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A fastener for securing coapted valve leaflets together, said fastener comprising:

a first plate having an axial and lateral direction;

a pair of laterally spaced-apart penetrating elements on the first plate, said first plate being free of additional penetrating elements spaced axially from the pair of laterally spaced-apart penetrating elements;

a second plate having an axial and lateral direction, wherein the first and second plates are joined by a laterally oriented hinge and the axial direction is perpendicular to this hinge; and

a pair of holes on the second plate arranged to receive the penetrating elements when the plates are brought together to fasten a pair of leaflets therebetween, wherein said fastener is adapted to be introduced via a percutaneous approach.

Claim 43. (CANCELLED).

44. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A fastener as in Claim 42, wherein the penetrating element passes entirely through the receiving hole.

45. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A fastener as in Claim 42, wherein the plates have a thickness in the range from 0.5 mm to 1.8 mm, a width in the range from 0.3 cm to 0.7 cm, and a length in the range from 0.6 cm to 1.4 cm.

46. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A fastener for securing coapted valve leaflets together, said fastener comprising:

a first plate having an axial and lateral direction;

a pair of laterally spaced-apart penetrating elements on the first plate, said first plate being free of additional penetrating elements spaced axially from the pair of laterally spaced-apart penetrating elements;

a second plate having an axial and lateral direction, wherein the first and second plates are joined by a laterally oriented hinge and the axial direction is perpendicular to this hinge; and

a pair of holes on the second plate arranged to receive the penetrating elements when the plates are brought together to fasten a pair of leaflets therebetween, wherein said fastener is adapted to be implanted in a heart.

Claim 47. (CANCELLED).

48. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A fastener as in Claim 46, wherein the penetrating element passes entirely through the receiving ~~hole~~ holes.

49. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A fastener as in Claim 46, wherein the plates have a thickness in the range from 0.5 mm to 1.8 mm, a width in the range from 0.3 cm to 0.7 cm, and a length in the range from 0.6 cm to 1.4 cm.